

Spawn Monitoring

A lot of research happens leading up to and during the spawning season of Nechako White Sturgeon.

BEFORE SPAWNING - RADIOTELEMETRY

Many of the adult sturgeon in the river have radiotags implanted in their bodies. The signal sent out by the radiotags can be detected by tracking equipment that is set-up at permanent locations between the overwintering and spawning grounds, or from hand-held equipment that is used from boats, planes or by walking along the river.

As sturgeon start to move up the river, their movement is detected by the equipment and this lets researchers know that spawning will start soon.



A member of the recovery team is using a hand-held **radiotelemetry tracking equipment** to find the location of an adult sturgeon. Adult sturgeon movements are tracked after spawning too.

DURING SPAWNING - EGG MATS

Egg mats lay on the bottom of the river and have a rough surface that sticky sturgeon eggs can stick to if they land on them. Remember, sturgeon are **broadcast spawners** - so they release their eggs into the water column and the eggs eventually land on the bottom of the river.



Carrier Sekani Tribal Council technicians check for wild sturgeon eggs on two **egg mats**. The eggs are collected in special jars and taken to the hatchery where they are raised and released back into the river as juveniles.

AFTER SPAWNING - FYKE NETS

Sturgeon eggs take about 2 weeks to hatch into larval sturgeon. To catch the larval sturgeon, researchers put fyke nets - or finely meshed tubes with a container at the end - into the water downstream of the spawning grounds. Larval sturgeon will move into the water column to move downstream, and this is when the fyke net can catch them.



Example of **fyke nets** set-up in a part of the river to catch larval fish. Not the long-sock like fine net that funnels the small fish to the bottom where they are caught in the container.

Recommended Lessons:

[Life Cycle 3-2](#)

[NWS Life Cycle Presentation](#)

More available at:

www.nechakowhitesturgeon.org/education

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